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'Wan Azizah is back-up candidate'

**ADIB POVERA
AND ILI SHAZWANI**

PARTY POLLS: Anwar says wife will quit race if his sodomy conviction is overturned

PARTI Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim claimed that his wife, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, filed her nomination papers to defend the president's post in the party as part of their back-up plan should he be disqualified from the race.

The opposition leader and Permatang Pauh member of parliament also hinted that his wife would withdraw from the race should he get the green light to contest the party's top post.

Anwar, who has filed an appeal against his sodomy conviction by the Court of Appeal at the Federal Court, denied speculation that both he and Wan Azizah were eyeing the post.

"It is just part of the back-up plan. If I get the clearance to contest, Wan Azizah will withdraw to make way for me," he said after a ceramah organised by the Pokok Sena Pas division here last night.

In **Petaling Jaya**, Wan Azizah's shocking move to square off against Anwar was confirmed by PKR central election committee chairman Datuk Johari Abdul after nomination for the party polls closed at 5pm at the party headquarters here yesterday.

Wan Azizah, through her representative, filed her nomination papers in the afternoon, but her candidacy was confirmed only after the last of three series of announcements on candidates was made. The couple submitted their nomination forms through their representatives.

News of the battle triggered speculation that a huge fight between the leaders is on the cards, as they are said to have their own supporters in the party.

The couple's daughter, Nurul Izzah Anwar, said Wan Azizah would make the justification for her candidacy soon. Asked who she supported, the Lembah Pantai member of parliament said: "We have 10 days before the list of candidates is finalised. Both of them have 10 days to win my votes."

Universiti Utara Malaysia political analyst Associate Professor Dr Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani believes that Wan Azizah will withdraw from the race if her husband succeeds in overturning his sodomy conviction at the Federal Court.

"I think Wan Azizah will withdraw (from the race) to allow him to become party president.

"The opposition leader (Anwar) is needed to bring a sense of purpose to PKR, since it has always been known as a party for Anwar's struggle. Anwar is trying to set a long-term agenda for his future in the party," he told the *New Sunday Times*.

Earlier, there were rumours that incumbent PKR deputy president Azmin Ali would contest the president's post when he arrived at the party's headquarters an hour before the closing period to submit his nomination form. The Gombak MP, however, said he would only be defending his post.

On why he had submitted his nomination papers in the last hour of nomination, Azmin said he had a long discussion with his colleagues about his political future.

"I also discussed with Anwar before we decided that I should retain my post."

Asked if the delay was because of his earlier intention to contest the president's post, Azmin said: "Well,

that is history. I have made my decision and filed my paper."

It will be a daunting task for Azmin to defend his post, with five aspiring candidates, including his political nemesis, Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim, vying to become the party's No. 2.

The other contenders include PKR secretary-general Datuk Saifuddin Nasution, former Puchong PKR division chief S. Murali and Datuk K. Ramachandram, who contested as the PKR candidate for the Batang Kali state seat in the 13th General Election.

Joining the contest for the deputy president's post is Batu MP Tian Chua, who sprung a surprise as he will also be defending his vice-president's post.

The contest for the vice-presidents' posts will be a crowded race, as it sees the participation of 16 candidates, including Tian Chua. Also defending their vice-presidents' posts are Nurul Izzah, Padang Serai MP N. Surendran, Kuantan MP Fuziah Salleh and Penang PKR chief Datuk Dr Mansor Othman.

Other contenders for the vice-presidents' posts include Sarawak PKR chief Baru Bian, outgoing PKR Youth chief Shamsul Iskandar Md Akin, PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli, Bukit Lanjan assemblyman Elizabeth Wong, PKR supreme council member Yahya Shaari, Sri Andalas assemblyman Dr Xavier Jayakumar, Perak PKR chief Mustaffa Kamil Ayub and former Kajang state assemblyman Lee Chin Cheh.

A total of 78 candidates will be contesting seats in the 20-member central committee.

The party polls will be held from April 25 to May 11. The results will be announced two days later. **Additional reporting by Lavanya Lingan**

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PKR nominations

INFOGRAPHIC: NST

PRESIDENT



Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (incumbent)



Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

DEPUTY PRESIDENT

1. Azmin Ali (incumbent)
2. Tian Chua (Chua Tian Chang)
3. Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim
4. Datuk Saifuddin Nasution Ismail
5. Datuk K. Ramachandram
6. S. Murali

10. Rafizi Ramli
11. Yahya Shaari
12. Lee Chin Cheh
13. Nurul Izzah Anwar (incumbent)
14. Dr Xavier Jayakumar
15. Shamsul Iskandar Md Akin
16. Tian Chua (incumbent)

VICE-PRESIDENTS (5 POSITIONS)

1. Baru Bian
2. Datuk Dr Mansor Othman (incumbent)
3. Fuziah Salleh (incumbent)
4. R. Suresh Kumar
5. N. Surendran (incumbent)
6. Mustaffa Kamil Ayub
7. Elizabeth Wong
8. Dr Shanmugam Ramasamy
9. Dr Streram Sinnasamy

CENTRAL COMMITTEE (78 CANDIDATES)

Youth chief

1. Nik Azmi Nik Ahmad
2. Mohd Nazree Yunus
3. Amiruddin Shaari

Women chief

1. Zuraida Kamaruddin (incumbent)
2. Rodziah Ismail

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